

# Hope and Destruction

by AlphaNinn

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Summary: This was originally posted under a different author name. But it's mine. So, read it, and review it, it's good.

## Hope and Destruction

> <meta name="Author"> Hope and Destruction Hope and Destruction

> By: Ninn

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Hidden away from prying eyes among the great oceans lay a single very

>small island. Contained within, hidden from many generations, was a secret that <br>had spawned great legends of hope, and legends just as great of destruction.

> Impossible to reach by all but one mean, and even then, it took more <br>luck than anyone had possessed in the search.

An aircraft, equipped for long periods of travel flew low over the

>southern continent, returning home. Below them, a field passed by quickly, <br>animals running for cover, flowers of various colors parted harshly from the

>downdraft. <br>On the craft, the mood was one of impatience. The crew had searched

>for months, turning up nothing. The same as searches before them, and the <br>same as searches after them.

200 generations prior.

She stood in a small room. There were too many people

>crammed in it, and she wanted to leave, to get out of the thick, cloying air. She <br>wanted to leave, but she could not. There was discussion going on around her,

>meaningless arguments that would only lead to more arguing. She waited <br>patiently for her turn to speak, but felt herself

beginning to daydream

>nonetheless. The arguments slowed, and she found herself immersed in the <br>events of the past week.

> <br> She was standing with two other people. The air around them was of

>sadness, as they had lost two of their companions in the past battles. Now, they <br>were getting harder, and their numbers were getting less.

> "Xala," one of her companions said, "Are you ready?" <br> She nodded slowly, her hand closing around the red orb that hung

>around her neck in a makeshift necklace. She wasn't supposed to use it, she <br>didn't even know what it did. They had other powerful magic. "Let's go."

> "Wait a minute," her other companion, had said "We don't have all our <br>magic - we're missing our revive spells," she paused, looking in her bag "And we

>don't have any items for that purpose." <br> That had unsettled her, "Then no one can get killed," she said, her voice

>of confidence, a confidence that she did not feel. <br> With an air of hopefulness they had headed into the next challenge. The

>enemy had fallen, but only after a long time, and her two companions had been <br>killed. She had been wounded, but was able to cure herself. Now, she was truly

>afraid. Alone, she might not succeed in the battles, no the battle, at that point <br>there was only one enemy left. She had sat there for a long time, waiting for

>nothing to happen. The orb hummed at her neck, taunting her, but she knew that <br>she could not use it.

> She had taken the magic off of her companions, stocking her weapon <br>and armor, and hoped that it would be enough. It hadn't been.

> The enemy was a monster, in form and in being. It was intelligent, and <br>had nearly killed her. Every attack she had tried, physical or magical, had cured

>it. She had tried curative magic, thinking it was undead, but that too healed it. In <br>desperation, she had used the orb at her neck, watching the attack in

>amazement and in horror. It was powerful, and the enemy had fallen, and when <br>the dust had settled she could see that the room that the fight had taken place in

>was now open to the air. <br> She stared at the orb, now in her hand, and regarded it with a sense of

>respect. If it fell into the wrong hands..... <p>

"Xala, you may speak now."

> The voice jolted her from her daydreaming. <br> "You all know that there was a great battle two days ago," Xala said with

>no formality, despite the fact that many of the people there were her superiors <br>"The end results of it were horrible. My companions were killed, and I barely

>escaped with my life." <br> "We know this, Xala. Please get to the point."

> Xala nodded and continued "This," she held up the orb "it what caused <br>it. I was at an extreme disadvantage, all my attacks were healing the creature,

>and I was nearly dead. Despite the advice and warnings I had received, I had no <br>choice but to use it. It destroyed not only the enemy, but the surrounding area

>was also destroyed. If someone uses this for the wrong purpose, I

don't want to <br>know what could happen," Xala finished, and looked around the room. There  
>were quiet discussions, and Xala stepped back. <br> "What do you want to do with it?" Someone in the back asked.  
> Xala looked up quickly and thought for a second before answering "Put it <br>somewhere inaccessible. Where it can only be got at by one mean."  
> "If it's as dangerous as you say, they why don't we just destroy it?" <br> "In the future, a situation far worse than this one may arise."  
> "Xala, I know of such a place. Would you take it there?" <br> "I guess I have to," she said quietly.

The place turned out to be a tiny island in the middle of the ocean. High  
>mountians surrounding it kept it safe. In the crater between the mountains, off to <br>the side was a cave. Xala, not knowing where else to put it, set it on a table like  
>rock in the middle. It glowed, giving the room an eerie glow. <br>Xala hurried out, she wanted nothing more to be back at her house. Her  
>transportation stood in the middle of the crater and she got on, riding away from <br>the island, staring only at the ocean in front of her.

Present

The situation had been growing progressively worse. Meteor had been

>summoned. The planet was doomed and would be dead within weeks if nothing <br>was done to stop it.  
> She had summoned Holy, but even as she had knelt there, tightly <br>clasping the small piece of materia she knew that it was only a last attempt, one  
>that would either work or it wouldn't. She had barely managed to finish <br>summoning it when she had been killed by the long terrible blade of Sephiroth's  
>sword. <br> When she had been a small child, even before her mother was dead,  
>she had told her a legend, or maybe it wasn't a legend. She had to swear not to <br>tell anyone, but her mother knew that the secret wasn't as well kept as it should  
>have been, as it was becoming a popular story, even if people didn't believe it. <br>Her mother had hoped that she would never have to use it, but now it seemed to  
>be so. She had been told where it was and how to get to it. It was amazing that <br>she still remembered how.  
> A grim smile crossed the face of the ghost. After she had been killed she <br>had gone back to the church in the slums, one of the places where she had  
>always felt most comfortable. <br> For her to follow the group further would have been impossible. While  
>she greatly wanted to do so, and she knew that some of the felt the same way, <br>she knew they would be able to feel her presence and welcome or not that would  
>be unsettling. <br> No, there paths were different. They would cross again, but that would  
>only be for a short time, and she wasn't sure of when it would happen. <br> She moved like a fluid, floating closer to the flowers. After such a long

>time of absence they were blooming as full as ever. That was good - there was <br>no way she could care for them now - not ever. Dimly she reflected that they <br>would be destroyed when Meteor hit, if it wasn't stopped. <br>Two small children came in and sat by the flowers, a boy and a girl, they <br>were dressed in rags, and sat by the flowers, doing nothing. One of them looked <br>up, almost as if he could see her, then glanced back down, looking sad.

> She raised her head and looked at the door. If one of the came here, <br>she might be able to tell them where the island was and how they could get <br>there. If one of them came back. But why would they? They had nothing to do <br>here, but she wouldn't give up hope.

> If it had been possible for her to cry, she would have. <br>> At the gate of Midgar stood a single man. He had been standing there <br>for the past week searching in vain hopes that he would find the key he lost. His <br>home was in that city, and he wanted to go back to his family. Now, his only <br>hope was that someone would come through the gate, even if he had to wait <br>there forever. Sitting down with his back to the wall, he gazed over the <br>landscape and almost missed the two people approaching, arguing between <br>themselves. <br>"I know it's in there. I just have to get to Wall Market!" Tifa exclaimed

>"And don't use the argument that we're spending too much time going out of our <br>way!" she said before Cloud could speak "We've practically gone over this entire <br>planet for everyone else." <br>"I never said no. I just said to hurry," Cloud replied. She made a face at <br>him and grabbed the key from his hand. <br>The gate opened easily and they passed through, Before the man <br>outside could stand, the gate closed and the he cried out in dejection. <br>Cloud and Tifa walked silently through the streets until they reached the <br>Sector 7 slums. <br>"Aeris," he muttered quietly.

> "Huh? Oh, yea... Listen, I'll go on ahead, you can catch up." <br>He nodded and she walked on ahead. She knew that he wasn't over her <br>death yet, and didn't feel like arguing. <br>He had met Aeris here, and had saved her here. Now, she was gone.

> The small church that she had spent a lot of time at was standing in front <br>of him. She had told him that she loved it there, where the flowers grew.

> Impulsively, he pushed open the heavy door. It was hanging on its <br>hinges and was quite easy to open. Two young children were sitting over the <br>flowers. They looked up, then returned to what they had been doing. <br>Cloud walked over to the flower bed and stood there. One of the <br>children, the girl, looked up at him. <br>"Why hasn't the flower girl come back yet?" she asked timidly, fear <br>evident in her voice. <br>Cloud knelt down next to her, "She's not coming back," he said quietly

>"But, I'm sure her spirit is here." <br>"Oh," she said, her voice no louder than a whisper.

> Standing again, watching memories in his mind, the air seemed to <br>shimmer in front of him.

> "Aeris?" he whispered, wanting her to be there. <br>"I am here,"

her voice rang in his mind 'Don't talk, just listen. The planet

>is going to die if something is not done.' <br> "But, you summoned Holy," he whispered, well aware of the two pairs of  
>eyes staring up at him. <br> 'For Meteor, yes. But Sephiroth and Jenova are an immediate threat, and  
>they must be stopped soon. There is a small island in the North East Ocean. <br>What you will find inside of it will help you greatly. It is extremely dangerous and  
>should only be used in the most desperate situation. The only way to get there is <br>by a Gold Chocobo,' she said, her voice fading. Cloud knew that he might never  
>see or hear her again. <br> "Good-bye, Aeris," he said and slowly walked out.

Tifa was already there when he exited.

> "What is it?" she asked him, seeing the strange look on his face. It was <br>an expression of sadness, but also one of acceptance.  
> "Nothing," he looked down at her hands "You got them? Good, we can <br>get out of the place."  
> They walked out in silence. When they returned to the gate the man was <br>still sitting there,  
> "Hey! You! Can you help me here?" <br> Cloud looked at him "What?"

> "I can't get back in, I lost my key to the gate. Please, my family is in <br>there and I really want to see them before Meteor hits."

> "Alright," Cloud opened the gate and the man scurried inside. <br> "Thanks. Really, I mean it!" he shouted as he ran quickly in the direction  
>of the slums. <br> Tifa looked at him as he ran "Strange."  
> Cloud just shrugged. <br> "Please, tell me what it is," she prodded gently  
> "I know of a way to kill Sephiroth." <br> "What? How?"  
> "There's a small island in the ocean that can only be reached by a Gold <br>Chocobo. It's supposed to contain something ultra-powerful."

> "I know how to get one easily!" she exclaimed "Well, it's not so easy, but <br>if we can defeat that Weapon in the desert, it's supposed to give us something  
>that we can trade for one," she shrugged. "Someone told me in Kalm that he <br>would."  
> "Well, then I guess we have no choice, it would take too long to breed <br>one. I guess we should use Bahamut Zero. It's the most powerful one we have at  
>the time." <br> "Ok, Um, use the W-Summon and HP absorb, that thing is supposed to  
>be powerful. Go at it alone, we only have one moogle, and you should use it." <br> "Alright," arranging the materia on his sword they headed for the  
>desert. <p>

The Weapon loomed in front of them, as if daring them to challenge it.

> "I'll wait back here. If you get in trouble I'll come in." <br> He looked at her "Don't. What good would it do if we both got killed."

>Neither of us have any Revive materia." <br> "I understand," she paused "Then you're just going to have to not get  
>into trouble." <br> She watched as he attacked the Weapon with his

sword, initiating

>combat. She wanted to pull her eyes away, but couldn't. Instead, she sat and <br>waited.

Cloud stood under the giant creature and watched as it stuck it's giant

>claws into the sand. Time to begin. <br> "Bahamut Zero! Twice!" he shouted, watching the creature come and

>attack. <br> Bahamut left. Before the Weapon could attack he shouted "Mime!"

>and watched as it happened again. <br> The Weapon was powerful, no doubt about that, but it couldn't heal it's

>self, and Cloud gained HP from every summon, allowing him to survive the <br>powerful attacks.

> The battle continued like that for a long time. Tifa was back on her feet <br>watching nervously. She hated seeing this and not being able to take part. That

>thing was deadly. She could see that Cloud was handling it well, and was falling <br>into a pattern consisting of miming his initial summon every turn. If it was

>working, she supposed, then there was no reason to stop. <br> Just as she was about to run in and help, despite being told not to, the

>giant creature fell to the desert with a giant thud. <br> Cloud came out of the sand, looking tired, but happy.

> "You did it!" she shouted. <br> "Yea," was his reply "Let's go get that bird."

Back in the town of Kalm, the panic that Meteor had spun, had not

>seemed to take hold. It was as peaceful as always. <br> "So, who told you he would give you a Gold Chocobo if you gave him

>this?" Cloud held up the desert rose. <br> "The person who lives in that house there," she pointed to the corner of

>the village. <br> "Alright, then."

> "Before we go get the bird, why don't we rest first?" Tifa suggested. <br> Cloud nodded, they had been walking for quite a while, and the fight had

>been long and hard. <br> They stayed at a small inn, despite the fact that the cost was enormous.

>The rooms had been comfortable enough and they had alot of money to spare. <br> "Sleep well? Tifa asked him the next morning when he met her in the

>main square. <br> "Yea. You?"

> "Uh huh." <br> "Which house did you say it was?" he asked again.

> "That one in the corner. Here, give me the rose, I'll go trade it." <br> He handed her the rose and waited outside the house. She emerged a

>few moments later leading a golden bird. <br> "Do you know how to ride one?"

> "I think so. We're pretty near to the coast, let's go. It's early, we can <br>probably be back by night."

> They mounted the bird in town and rode off. <br> An hour later they were in the middle of the ocean.

> "How is this possible?" Tifa muttered to herself as she watched the bird <br>gallop easily across the water.

> "I can see the island," Cloud called back to her. <br> Straining over his shoulder, she could see that they were about to go

>over the mountain surrounding it. <br> A minute later they were on

the island.

> "That bird is fast," she commented "You go get whatever's inside there, <br>I'll make sure the bird doesn't get away."  
> "Good idea. If it got away, we'd have a long swim." <p>

The inside of the cave was dark. After his eyes adjusted he could see

>the only light was a red glow in the middle. A red glow that almost looked like a <br>summon materia.

>Questions forming in his mind he walked over and picked it up. The <br>name rang in his mind "Knights of the Round"  
> 'Why is it here?' <p>

Tifa stood outside, watching the entrance as Cloud came out. He was

>holding a piece materia in his hand. <br> "What was it?"

> "Materia. A summon. Ever hear of "Knights of the Round?" <br> "No."

> "Well, let's just hope it's effective against Sephiroth," he said bluntly. <br> Tifa nodded uncertainly, "Better keep it away from Yuffie."

> "I was planning to. It took us a long time to get here," he said eyeing the <br>sky. The sun was on its downward curve, still not dark, but leaving only 4 or 5

>hours of daylight. "If we hurry, we can make it before dark, but I don't think the <br>bird would appreciate us pushing it that much, especially after it had been

>running all morning." <br> The bird looked at him and made a sound.

> "The ocean is filled with islands that we could stop at, but I think we <br>should head straight back," Tifa said, eyeing the sky.

> "Yeah..." <br> They mounted the bird again and started at a fast pace. Once again,

>Tifa found herself staring at the water as they flew over it. She wondered how it <br>stayed on top, but kept the question unvoiced.

> The chocobo kept a good pace, slowing sometimes, but recovering in a <br>quick burst of speed.

> Night came slowly, the sky turning purple, then darkening to black. The <br>stars came out one by one, looking for all the world like diamonds floating in the

>sky above. <br> Before long, she could tell the bird was beginning to tire. She voiced her

>concern. <br> "I know, but I think we're almost there," was his reply.

> The bird had obviously taken a different course back. When they hit dry <br>land, they were nowhere near Kalm, instead, in the distance was the distinct

>shape of the Chocobo farm. <br> Cloud sighed, at least they would have somewhere to sleep that night.

> "I'll go see if we can leave our bird here," he said, and headed into the <br>yard. A while later he was back.

> "We can stay here for the night. In the morning, we can catch a wild <br>Chocobo, and ride down to Junon."

> "Junon?" Tifa asked. <br> "We're meeting Cid and the others there."

The next morning was bright and clear. They fought around the farm for

> awhile, and were rewarded with a decent, if slightly slow bird. <br>  
As soon as they were in view of the city tifa grimaced "I hate this place,  
> too dark and damp." <br> "I don't really like it either. C'mon, let's go."  
> They got off the bird and watched as it ran away. Right inside the <br>  
<br> entrance stood Vincent, looking as if he had been waiting for them.  
> "What's wrong?" Cloud asked, noting the look of concern on his face. <br>  
<br> "What took you so long? I thought you were just going to Midgar."  
> "We got a bit sidetracked," Tifa explained "Where is everyone?" <br>  
<br> "Yuffie took all our materia again, so Cid and Barret went after her. Red 13  
> had to go back to Cosmo Canyon - some kind of trouble there. He mentioned <br>  
<br> something about a flame going out. But we can't wait any longer. Meteor is  
> dangerously close." <br> "If we have to go now we can," Cloud assured him "I have some materia,  
> plus the one we just got," he paused for a second "Have you ever heard of <br>  
<br> "Knights of the Round?"  
> Vincent hesitated, something about it sounded vaguely familiar, a legend <br>  
<br> her had heard in his childhood. "I think I heard something about it in a legend -  
> something super powerful hidden away, right?" <br> "Something like that," Cloud affirmed "It's our best chance to beat  
> Sephiroth and any Jenovas we run into." <br> Vincent looked at him doubtfully but said nothing. Tifa nodded, not  
> looking the happiest. <br> "It would be easier if everyone was here and we were fully equipped, but  
> we can't go around mastering another set of materia so..." she trailed off. <br>  
<br> "We should leave as soon as possible. I have a Gold Chocobo at the  
> farm, so we shouldn't have too much trouble getting up to the crater. We're <br>  
<br> going to have to walk to the farm, so we have to be careful."  
> They nodded, but there was nothing else they could do as they began to <br>  
<br> walk.

At the farm, their Chocobo stood in the middle of the fenced in area. It

> stood out among the others, they were just plain yellow. There was a blue one, <br>  
<br> but that one was hiding in the corner.  
> The bird saw them approach and made a happy sound. <br> Cloud disappeared in the house and came out a minute later followed by

> the farm's owner who unlocked the gate and let the bird out. <br>  
<br> Cloud was the first one to get on, followed closely by Tifa and a more

> reluctant Vincent. <br> "Don't worry, our combined weight isn't enough to bother it," Cloud

> remarked, as he watched Vincent slowly climb on. <br> "You never know," Vincent replied.

> Tifa laughed at him as he climbed on then nearly fell off. On his second <br>  
<br> try he managed to stay on and once again they were flying across the landscape

> on the back of the golden creature. <br> The land ran out and they were on ocean. The air slowly got colder.

> Within a half hour, they were on the Northern Continent, and within another 25 <br>  
<br> minutes they were staring down into the seemingly



bottomless pit of the large  
>hole in the ground. <br> "Do you think the Chocobo can make it down there?" Vincent asked.  
> "Don't know," Cloud replied, "I don't want to try though, we don't know <br>the condition of the path is. It might hold it - but if it doesn't, we could be in  
>trouble." <br> Before Vincent could say anything in response, a violent gust of wind  
>buffetted them, almost causing Tifa to fall into the pit. She managed to regain <br>her balance, and almost slipped again as a chunk of ice underneath her feet  
>became dislodged. Cloud grabbed her arm and pulled her away from the rim. <br> "Thanks," she muttered, embarrassed at not being more cautious.  
>She shivered, becoming aware of the bitter cold. "It's getting really cold up here." <br> "You're right, it's probably warmer down there. Let's get going."  
> The three of them, shivering from the cold, and fear beginning to make <br>itself known within them, headed down into the dark depths.

> The crater had been fairly easy to navigate when they came to the split. <br> "Which way?" Vincent asked, looking between the two paths.  
> "I don't think it matters," Cloud said, his voice distant. <br> "Then let's go to the right," Tifa said and headed in that direction before  
>they could protest. They followed her. <br> The path ended abruptly. Looking over the side, Cloud could see that it  
>continued in a downward spiral. They would have to climb down before they <br>could walk again.  
> "I hope you guys don't mind climbing." <br> "Why?" Tifa asked, with Vincent asking at almost the same time.  
> "The path continues, but we have to climb to get down to it. Shouldn't be <br>that hard, though," Cloud said, looking at them.

> "Well, we don't really have any choice," Vincent reasoned "Unless we <br>want to go back and try the other path."  
> "Thanks but no," Tifa said firmly "Let's just climb." <br> They got down the spiral quickly and found nothing of interest in the

>connecting rooms, so they continued straight. <br> "We could have brought the bird down here," Vincent complained.  
> "Shut up!" Tifa shouted at him. <br> Cloud mentally thanked her.

> They came to a strange ledge. Floating in front of it were boulders, <br>heading further into the planet. Cloud stared at these for a moment, wondering  
>how it was possible for rocks like that to float how they were. <br> "Sephiroth's down there," Cloud whispered, so quietly that he didn't

>expect the others to hear him. <br> Tifa looked at him "Then we'd better hurry," she said quietly.  
> Vincent looked between the two, not saying anything, just looking. He <br>was beginning to have second thoughts. When he had joined them, he had been  
>expecting to get his revenge and then leave. In no way had he expected to be <br>standing in the middle of the planet, trying to kill an elusive man. Vincent almost  
>turned back, but then he saw the look in his companions eyes. A look of <br>determination, courage, acceptance of what they were going to

do, and hatred.

>It was that look that kept Vincent down in that crater. How would he live with <br>himself if he turned back, knowing that his friends may die, and Meteor would hit.

>He didn't want to die hating himself. Turning away from them he composed <br>himself and then, facing them again walked over to them.

> "We can't turn back now," Vincent said, voice now filled with <br>determination. While he may never feel the same as they did, he would do all

>he could to help. <br> "Right."

> They jumped onto the rock one by one, afraid that they might cause it to <br>fall to the depths below.

> Around them, the air grew misty. It became harder to see, and they <br>moved slowly, not wanting to miss a step.

> On every rock was a battle, none of them which caused any particular <br>difficulty, or threatened them with much danger.

> Despite the fact that they weren't having trouble, the fact that there was <br>no one to help them with the upcoming battle unnerved Cloud more than he

>wanted to admit. He had a feeling that the others felt the same way. <br> Cloud looked down at the last rock before the center. Something was

>sitting on it, and that shape could only be Jenova. Which one, he didn't know. <br>"Get prepared," he said to the others.

> "Cloud, you have the materia, so you're going to have to do the most <br>attacking. We'll stand back and use our limit breaks as soon as we can," Vincent

>told him. <br> "Use Bahamut Zero first - we don't know how desperate the situation will

>become. Only use Knights of the Round if there's no other way," Tifa added. <br> Cloud nodded. This was going to be fun. Bracing himself for a tough

>battle, he leapt down to the final rock, with Vincent and Tifa close behind. <br> They took the classic battle formation. Cloud in the front center with

>Vincent and Tifa to his sides and slightly behind him. Determined to attack first, <br>Cloud lifted his materia "Bahamut Zero! Twice!" he shouted, as the two pieces

>of materia glittered in his hand. Bahamut came, and began attacking the giant <br>beast. The three watched from back further, where the summoned monster could

>not hurt them. The summon finished and Jenova attacked, a powerful one that <br>allowed Tifa and Vincent to launch into their limits, causing large amounts of

>damage in a single blow. <br> Cloud watched them, and then mimed his initial attack. After 5 rounds of

>that strategy, Jenova fell. They had won the battle, but were still a long way from <br>winning the war.

> "Everyone, use Potions to heal yourself, we're not going to need them <br>later anyway," Cloud ordered. Tifa nodded and threw an X-Potion on herself,

>and Vincent threw two Hi-Potions. <br> "Sephiroth is down there. We have to do this. To save the planet!"

>Vincent said, not feeling any of the confidence that he spoke with. <br> "To save the planet!" Cloud and Tifa echoed.

> "I wonder what's going to happen when this is over," Tifa whispered to <br>herself, looking at her companions - no - her friends.

Whatever was going to

>happen, they would take it together. <br>

> The core of the planet, or that's where they thought they were, glowed <br>with an eerie blue light. The light hid everything inside of it, but it diminished as  
>they watched. The space that it revealed was empty. The trio stared at it, none <br>of them moving, not wanting to go down, but knowing that every moment they  
>wasted Meteor came closer. <br>They were deep in the core, and it might protect them - but that wouldn't do  
>good. The surface would be ruined and they would die anyway. Might as well go <br>out hereos.  
> On an unspoken signal they advanced toward the final rock, not knowing <br>what to expect.  
> Suddenly a figure appeared. He landed softly a couple of feet in front of <br>them, laughing. "You're more foolish than I though," he hissed menacingly. "You  
>can't win. Soon I will be part of the planet, after I kill you."  
<br> "No," Cloud whispered, that single word containing more anger than a  
>scream. "No." <br> Sephiroth seemed suprized by the reaction. His eyes met Clouds and the  
>gaze that passed between them was enough to shrivel the strongest person. <br> Tifa put her hand on Clouds shoulder, but he brushed it away. She was  
>slightly stung, but understood. <br> "You won't win, not without your companions. Even if you get lucky,  
>Meteor will impact in a matter of hours..." he left the sentence trailing, allowing <br>each of the people in front of him to come to their own conclusion.  
> A look of horror crossed Tifa's face. Even if they won, they would still lose. <br> Vincent kept his face blank. All that this meant to him was that he would  
>die sooner than before, a suitable punishment. <br> Cloud set his jaw, and between clenched teeth hissed "Ultimate End,  
>twice!" <br> Sephiroth looked at him, as if laughing at him.  
> Tifa gasped and shouted at him "What are you doing? You don't know <br>what will happen!"  
> Cloud didn't even glance at her. This had to work, it had to. <br> Sephiroth didn't even flinch as the 13 knights descended upon him,  
  
>battering him with powerful psysical and magic attacks. And the second time, he <br>didn't even seem to weaken.  
> Cloud looked at him in horror. He screamed "Mime" and watched as it <br>happened again. This time, though, something was happening. The Knights  
>were doing damage, and Sephiroth was weakening. <br> After they were finished, Sephiroth attacked, a powerful attack that  
>immediatley filled all of their limits. Vincent opted out of his, he didn't want to <br>transform. Tifa on the other hand, took full advantage of the situation "Final Heaven" She  
>shouted and launched into her attack. <br> Cloud did also. "Omnislash!" he shouted, and handed out blow after  
>blow of powerful attacks. <br> Sephiroth staggered, and fell, apparrantly defeated.  
> <br> On the surface, Holy reached out for Meteor, but instead of repelling it, it  
>pulled it in further. Suddenly, without warning, the lifestream surged, managing <br>to do what Holy could not. Meteor slowly stopped and then shattered into a  
>million tiny bits, raining down harmlessly down over the planet.  
<p>

Underneath, though, the situation was grim. It appeared that they had won, but now they were stuck with no way out. When the lifestream had surfaced, it had destroyed their chain of rocks that they had climbed down on.

> "Anyone have any ideas?" Cloud asked. Vincent shook his head slowly, and Tifa looked to the ground.

> "We're stuck," she whispered her voice devoid of any emotion. "But we beat him, and gave the planet another chance - if the surface is still ok," she added, sounding slightly brighter.

> "There has to be a way out," Cloud was saying, when Sephiroth was suddenly in front of them again.

> "Pitiful. Do you really think that you can defeat me that easily?" he asked, his tone mocking.

> "Impossible," Vincent whispered "You couldn't have survived that.

> "There's no way." "If you were paying any attention at all, then you would've known that that wasn't me. A mere illusion. Illusions can't be harmed."

> Cloud shuddered. Another illusion, a mind trick. He had been fooled by them before and had promised himself that he would recognize them in the future.

> He had been wrong. They had underestimated the power of Sephiroth, and now they would pay.

> Before any of them could react, Sephiroth cast another powerful spell "Heartless Angel". They found themselves nearly wiped out, with no curative spells and a supply of potions that was almost gone.

> "Vincent, Tifa, take the potions," Cloud said slowly, his tone one of no argument.

> Tifa glared at him, wanting to protest, but she could see his logic. As much as she hated to admit it, she knew that he was stronger, and could hold out longer than she or Vincent could. Flashing him a small smile she threw an X-Potion on her and felt a surge of strength run through her body.

> Vincent, looking at the X-Potion in his hand, hesitated to use it. He didn't deserve to live, after the things he had almost done. No, Cloud should take it. He voiced that and the offer was refused.

> Vincent looked at him - he obviously wanted it, but wanted his friends to live more than he wanted to. Now, looking back, Vincent was ashamed at himself. He had almost turned back and left them. A couple of times, knowing that they had stood little chance against their opponents, had nearly turned them in. He could not live like that. Throwing the X-Potion on himself, he vowed to do all he could to see that Sephiroth was destroyed.

> Sephiroth stood in front of them, watching the pitiful show of affection. He could have killed any one of them easily, yet didn't. Let them fight if they wanted to, it wouldn't matter. Instead, he would play with them. Smiling wickedly, he cast Heartless Angel again.

Tifa fell to her knees, devastated. They couldn't last. It was apparent that Sephiroth was playing with them, and had no intention of stopping. From the look on Vincent's face, she could see that he had come to

a similar conclusion.

> <br> From nowhere came a pale green light. It swirled around them, creating  
> what seemed to be a shield and healing them. At the same time, Seioiroth was <br> blown backwards, into the abyss below. Then, the green light  
> disappeared. <br> "What was that?" Vincent asked, not expecting a reply.  
> "Aeris," Cloud muttered "Thank you." <br> Tifa smiled, and Vincent still looked confused. Aeris had helped them  
> when they needed it, and had probably saved almost the entire population of the <br> planet at the same time.  
> "We still have the problem of getting out," Vincent pointed out, looking <br> upwards toward where they had come.  
> "He's still here," Cloud said. <br> "What?"  
> "Sepiroth." <br> "How do you know?"  
> "I just do." <br> "Where is he?"  
> In response, Cloud walked over to the side and jumped down.  
<p>

There was no ground, that was the first thing he noticed, and there were

> stars around them. 'Almost like Bugenhagen's machine,' he thought. <br> Sepiroth was standing opposite of him, and Cloud knew that this would

> be the final time they met, no matter what the outcome of this was. He knew that <br> he wouldn't be here for long, either, so he had to make it count.

> The summons wouldn't work, a waste of time and little real damage. The <br> kill had to be physical, so he waited, feeling his Limit fill up quicker than normal.

> Before Sepiroth could attack, Cloud shouted "Omnislash!" and ran to him <br> attacking, each slice more powerful than the last. Sepiroth fell, this time

> defeated. The world was finally rid of the threat. <br> After Sepiroth fell, Cloud felt himself black out. When he woke up, he

> was on the surface, Tifa and Vincent a short distance away. <p>

The island was still in the middle of the ocean. They had gotten there

> through creative means, a small boat, and mountain climbing equipment. <br> Cloud stared at the small red orb in his hand. Vincent had thought it was

> crazy to put it back, but he had noticed that after it had been used, the cavern <br> had been wider, the rock chipped out by an invisible force. He couldn't take the

> risk that it was Sepiroth's attacks that did it, reasoning that such a powerful <br> piece of materia must have some effect on the area around it, that it could

> destroy not only its intended target, but the area around it as well. <br> It was better that they put it back. It might be needed again.

Cloud looked back at the island as Tifa steered the boat towards the

> mainland. None of them spoke, there were no words to be said. <br> Around them the water stretched on seemingly forever, and two voices seemed to float

> on the wind. Aeris's and another woman's, sounding like a half

forgotton memory, as if telling <br>them they did the right thing. He  
had doubted before, but hearing that, all doubts were gone from

>his mind, and he watched the shore come closer.  
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Dying dreams,  
> A half forgotton memory, <br> A past long gone,  
> Loves long gone. <p>

Dying dreams,  
> A future foretold, <br> Choices to be made,  
> A life to be made. <p>

A new hope,  
> A road being forged, <br> Past mistakes remembered,  
> New ones to come. <p>

Just something I wrote that I thought fit with this

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\_\_\_\_ <br>

So, What did you think? Please E-mail me your comments at  
star\_dreamer\_421@excite.com

Notes:

>I wrote this when I was extremly bored. It is one of my better  
pieces, probably because I <br>had three people staring over my  
shoulder as I was writing it. .

>The characters contained within do no belong to me, with the  
exception of Xala, and I am <br>not making any money off of this.

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End  
file.